

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheet makes changes to Fig. 24 and replaces the original sheet with Figs. 24 and 25.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 and 9-15 are pending. By this Amendment, the specification, Fig. 24 and claims 1, 3, 5, 6 and 9 have been amended and claim 8 has been canceled. In particular, support for the amended features recited in claim 1 can be found on page 21, lines 8-14, for example, the amendments to claims 5 and 6 can be found in Applicants' Fig. 11, for example, and Fig. 24 has been amended to add reference numeral 4.

Restriction was required and Applicants elected claims 1-7 and 9-16. Applicants reserve the right to file one or more divisional applications based on non-elected claim 8.

Three references in a January 10, 2005 Information Disclosure Statement were not considered because a concise explanation of relevance was allegedly not provided. However, a concise explanation was provided by the English-language translation of the International Search Report. Applicants enclose a copy of the Form PTO-1449, the English-language translation of the International Search Report and a copy of the date stamped receipt for the Examiner's convenience. It is requested that the Examiner consider the references and return a completely initialed Form PTO-1449 to Applicants' representative.

The drawings were objected to and the specification and Fig. 24 have been amended responsive to the objection. In particular, with page 10, last paragraph, Applicants intend to indicate that the articles 31, 34 have a width smaller than each of the articles 32, 33, and thus an amendment is not necessary. It is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-7 and 9-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5 and 6 have been amended responsive to the rejection. In particular, Applicants refer to Fig. 11, for example, for support to the amendments of claims 5 and 6. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-6 and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Cameron et al. (Cameron), U.S. Patent No. 4,552,793. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Cameron fails to disclose using an insulator that has a density of about 10-32 kg/m³, as recited in claim 1. Cameron fails to disclose this feature in claim 1 because Cameron only discloses using a density of 40 kg/m³ (col. 6, lines 33-34). Furthermore, Cameron's Fig. 6 only plots compressive strength at a density of approximately 40 kg/m³ or more. Cameron thus fails to disclose all of the features recited in claim 1.

Cameron also fails to suggest using a density of about 10-32 kg/m³ because Cameron teaches away from using a density less than 40 kg/m³. Cameron teaches away from using a lower density because Cameron is concerned about compression strength in a direction perpendicular to the major surface of the mat (generally up-down direction in Fig. 2) (col. 1, lines 38-39), whereas claim 1 is concerned about compression strength in a different direction. In addition, Cameron is directed to increasing compression strength (col. 2, lines 41-42), and thus does not consider a density less than 40 kg/m³.

Cameron also fails to disclose lateral surfaces of an insulator that are inclined as recited in claim 2. Page 2 of the Office Action refers to Cameron's cut face 31 as the inclined lateral surface (Fig. 2). However, the product at the cut face 31 is not an insulator formed by integrating the cut articles and/or the rotated article transversally in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction, as defined by claim 1. In other words, although the product at the cut face 31 may have an inclined surface, the cut articles and/or the rotated articles have not been integrated yet at the cut face 31, and thus Cameron fails to disclose the resulting insulator recited in claim 2.

Cameron also fails to disclose an insulator provided with longitudinal cuts on the lateral surfaces of the insulator so as to make the insulator partially compressible, as recited in claims 3 and 9. For reasons similar to claim 2, although longitudinal cuts produced by the cutters 28 are illustrated, the cut article and/or the rotated article have not been integrated yet

at the cutters 28, and thus Cameron fails to disclose the resulting insulator recited in claims 3 and 9.

It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 7 and 12-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Cameron in view of Berdan, U.S. Patent No. 5,350,063. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Berdan fails to overcome the deficiencies of Cameron as applied to claim 1. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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JAO:SMS/sxb

Attachments:

Petition for Extension of Time
Replacement Sheet
Copy of the Form PTO-1449, English-Language Translation of International Search Report, and Copy of the January 10, 2005 Date Stamped Receipt

Date: February 22, 2007

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